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ABSTRACT

This report describes the activities and operations of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). Over the past 12 months, WICHE member states have faced the toughest financial times in recent memory. Higher education in member states, as in the rest of the country, has been hit hard, with midyear budget cuts, reduced financial aid, and student populations that continue to grow. In the past year, WICHE has been busy analyzing policy options and exploring alternatives and solutions to financial problems facing higher education. WICHE has produced its annual report on tuition and fees and has been instrumental in the study of distance education options. A WICHE core activity for years has been the facilitation of student exchange among institutions in different states, and these activities continued in the past year. Although finance issues are not the only problems facing WICHE members, financial constraints relate to each of these important concerns: access, quality and innovation, workforce development, and accountability. This annual report shows how WICHE has been working on these issues. Individual sections describe WICHE efforts with regard to: (1) policy analysis and research; (2) programs and services; (3) the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications; (4) a mental health program; and (5) the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration. (SLD)

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WICHE Annual Report 2003

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THE SPIRIT OF THE WEST

OVER the last twelve months, WICHE's member states have faced the toughest financial times in recent memory. Higher education has been hit hard, with midyear budget cuts, slashed financial aid, and student populations that continue to grow. And there's more of the same to come.

In the true spirit of the West, higher ed is rising to the challenge. At times like these, WICHE's services are particularly valuable, tapping, as they do, the power of collaboration and the particular strengths of our region. In the last year, we have not only recognized the new stringency that higher ed is laboring under but have also addressed it through our programs and services, preparing the ground for future work that will help our member states and their institutions overcome the daunting obstacles now before them, and come out on the other side more efficient, smarter, and stronger.

WICHE Celebrating 30 Years

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Contents

Chair's Message 2

Executive Director's Message 4

Policy Analysis and Research 6

Programs and Services 9

WCET: Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications 12

Mental Health Program 14

CONAHEC: Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration 16

Commissioners 18

Chair's Message: Charles P. Ruch

I have just returned from the April 2003 Idaho State Board of Education meeting, where student fees for FY04 were the major agenda item. Our debate this year was no different than previous years, though given the dramatic changes in our economic climate, the level of argument and the consequences of this policy action were elevated. For several years, the cherished policy values of student access, institutional quality, and available state resources have been on a collision course. For many of us, the collision is upon us. Whether at the campus, system, or policy level, hard choices are unavoidable, and these choices will texture and change the nature of higher education in the West.

Keenly aware of these changing conditions, WICHE has been front and center in playing a role in the analysis of policy options, the consideration of alternatives, and the facilitation of solutions. Work in the area of analysis includes the annual *Tuition and Fees* report and the regional factbook, *Policy Indicators for Higher Education.* These valuable resources serve to inform the conversation at all levels of policy consideration. Furthermore, a number of multiyear projects on higher education finance, financial aid, and access serve to stretch our understanding of the consequences of critical policy directions.

Distance education and technology-mediated forms of learning have become powerful complements to the traditional delivery system for higher education. Here, too, WICHE is playing an important role. WCET, the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications, is the leader in the promotion, utilization, and improvement of the many dimensions of distance education. They are currently working on projects involving costing methodologies, comparison of electronic-learning resources, outreach networks, and the financing of information technology, to mention but a few of their initiatives.

A core activity of WICHE since its inception 50 years ago is the facilitation of student exchange among institutions in different states. Designed to maintain access to important programs, the trio of student exchange programs – Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), and the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) – provided exchange opportunities to

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some 18,000 students last year. Additionally, the Northwest Academic Forum is sponsoring a number of regional initiatives designed to facilitate more collaborative exchanges of faculty and students in areas of critical shortage.

A confluence of several forces – including declining state resources, increasing student enrollments, and the increased importance of higher education to the quality of life and economic health of the Western states – is demanding thoughtful and powerful policy initiatives within and among our states. These and other yet-to-be-determined critical issues have become the centerpiece of the WICHE workplan. WICHE exists to serve its members in their efforts to improve higher education for all our citizens. We welcome all involved to join with the commission, utilizing its services and contributing to its deliberations.

Charles P. Ruch
President, Boise State University

Executive Director's Message: David Longanecker

Chuck Ruch, in his introductory comments for this annual report, outlined the big issue for Western higher education this coming year: *dollars, or the lack thereof!* Fiscal constraints are taking quite a toll and consuming most of our policy "energy" in the West, and that will continue to be the case, at least for the foreseeable future.

We must not forget, however, that finance issues aren't the only important policy agenda before us. As this report reflects, access, quality and innovation, workforce development, and accountability also remain paramount issues, despite the fact that it may be difficult to build a public agenda around them in these tough times. Of course, financial constraints relate to each of these issue areas.

Access has always been central to WICHE's mission – and times like these make it particularly important. Supporting the goal of access becomes particularly difficult when states are financially strapped. As state purses become depleted, states and institutions have a hard time keeping price (tuition) in check and sustaining strong support for financial aid. Keeping pace with financial aid for needy students is even tougher, as it actually requires increasing aid, particularly as tuitions rise; simply sustaining funding means losing ground.

States and institutions aren't the only ones hurting. Students and their families are also facing more financial difficulties than at any time in recent history, making it a major challenge to fund a college education. But even those who can afford to attend find that, in other ways, access is at risk. As institutions become starved of their resources, remedial education courses are often cut, both because they are unpopular and because they are often not perceived as core activities. Yet they are essential for at-risk students, if they are to succeed in college. Additionally, students suffer as course offerings are cut back, prolonging the time to completion and again jeopardizing access to success. Given the consequences, we simply can't backslide on access: we must maintain our focus on this critical issue, finding innovative ways to support broad access to higher ed even in these tough times.

Quality and innovation also cannot be overlooked in times like these. Higher education is only as good as those providing it; thus, we must nurture and reward our faculty if we expect to be able to provide high quality education. In the competitive world of

American higher education, this becomes particularly important because others covet our best educators. Yet reduced resources make it hard for us to sustain salaries that will retain and attract the best faculty possible. So the availability and quality of our future faculty is an issue we cannot overlook. Yet tough times make it difficult to value and recognize the worth of those who serve use well.

Workforce development issues also remain paramount in these tough times. This spring's college graduates have found it more difficult to finds jobs than at any time in recent history. This leads some to wonder whether higher education is really that great an investment, both for individuals and for society at large. After all, if you can't get a good job, why make such a substantial investment? Such thinking, however, is mighty short sighted. Every analysis demonstrates clearly that the high-skills requirements of the future will require some education beyond high school for almost all high-wage jobs. Failing to provide that today will deprive our citizens of the opportunity to realize their full potential and will starve our states of the human resources necessary to compete effectively in the future.

While finance problems consume much of our attention, we simply cannot fail to continue to focus on other critical issues as well – issues of access, quality and innovation, and workforce development. This annual report lays out how WICHE has addressed each of these issues and how WICHE is working to develop accountability measures and processes that will help demonstrate progress in the West toward advancing the public good in each dimension.

David Longanecker
Executive Director, WICHE

Policy Analysis and Research

The goal of the Policy Analysis and Research unit is to offer analysis, support and data to constituents on a number of issues, including access, finance, accountability, and information technology. In 2003, projects included:

- Pathways to College Network
- Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning Opportunities (WCALO)
- Western Policy Exchange forums and roundtables
- Tuition & Fees in Public Education in the West
- The WICHE Factbook: Policy Indicators for Higher Education
- Policy Insights and Exchanges – short reports on major policy issues and activities
- Policy Alerts and Stat Alerts – electronic notices on new reports and data sources
- Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates by State, Income Level and Race/Ethnicity, 1998-2018
- Changing Direction: Integrating Higher Education Financial Aid and Financing Policy
- U.S./U.K. Higher Education Policy Dialogue
- Expanding Engagement: Public Policy to Meet State and Regional Needs

The Policy Analysis and Research unit supports Western states' concerns about higher education public policy issues and better informed decision-making through research and policy initiatives that focus on finance, access, accountability, and workforce development.

Last year, the Policy unit had several projects underway that targeted finance issues. One example: *Changing Direction: Integrating Higher Education Financial Aid and Financing Policy*, an initiative that focuses on aligning policy dealing with financial aid, financing, and appropriations. Funded by Lumina Foundation for Education, this multiyear project has supported the restructuring of these policies and practices to maximize participation, access, and success for all students. Contingent on continuation funding for Phase 2 of this project, the Policy unit will examine the impact of revenue and expenditure constraints on the future viability of higher education in the West; it will examine retention issues, working to identify the links between retention and financing and financial aid policies.

Another example: state profiles on tax structures and revenue adequacy. With support from our Ford Foundation projects on strengthening legislative engagement, we commissioned a consultant to prepare individual state profiles for the WICHE

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states to stimulate discussion on the adequacy of state tax structures to support public services, such as higher education.

A primary goal of the Policy unit is to offer analysis, support, and data to constituents on a number of issues, including access. One of its major endeavors in 2002-03: its work with the Pathways to College Network, an alliance of private and corporate foundations, nonprofits, educational institutions, and the U.S. Dept. of Education. Pathways' goal is to improve access to higher education for disadvantaged students, and to help prepare them to take advantage of what higher ed has to offer. The Pathways Network – which includes researchers, policy analysts, educators, K-12 administrators, government, business, foundations, and community organizations – seeks to identify the best ways of putting disadvantaged students on the road to college. The Pathways Network's 13 funders and 17 educational and community organizations are working together to create new programs that open college doors for low-income students. To support this effort, WICHE has developed an online searchable policy inventory and assisted with case studies, roundtables, and strategy briefs. Also this year, WICHE hosted, with New Mexico, a Western Policy Forum for Pathways. In addition, WICHE's role in the Pathways Network involves assisting with oversight of the project's major components and directing the project's policy component.

Another continuing project related to WICHE's ongoing efforts to promote access to higher education for all students is the Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning Opportunities (WCALO) – a project funded by a grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education's Advanced Placement Incentive Program. A partnership whose nine members are Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, and Utah, WCALO's goal is to increase the number of low-income and rural students succeeding in accelerated-learning courses. States participate in the consortium in a variety of ways, including: supporting students from low-income families with fee reimbursement for Advanced Placement (AP) exams; providing professional development for teachers, administrators, and counselors; subsidizing online accelerated-learning courses; and participating in the consortium's network of state education agency and state higher education executive office representatives.

As part of the Policy unit's continuing work on high school graduates, it added a new research initiative to project high school grads by family income level, powerfully supplementing its extensive databases on race and ethnicity. By combining income-level and racial/ethnic data for elementary and secondary school students, WICHE

will be able to add another dimension to its projections of high school graduates, providing policymakers and educators with the hard data they'll need to make informed decisions about the effect of changing demographics on higher education.

On the workforce front, the Policy unit received funding from the Ford Foundation to look at four workforce areas in depth: nursing, information technology, teacher education, and faculty. The grant supports activities such as roundtables, policy forums, and research, as well as the WICHE Fellows and a post-doc WCET position.

The Policy unit assisted some Western states last year as they developed new strategic plans designed to provide greater accountability in relation to the states' higher education investments. Through a Ford Foundation grant, staff also assisted California with discussions around accountability. Our multiyear project, *Expanding Engagement: Public Policy to Meet State and Regional Needs*, supported by the Ford Foundation, provides an opportunity for policymakers, institutional leaders, and others in the higher ed community to better understand the relationships between finance and accountability issues. The release of the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education's *Measuring Up 2002*, a state-by-state report card for higher education, allows WICHE opportunities to provide technical assistance to Western states on accountability issues.

A number of continuing Policy projects relate to accountability and other higher ed issues. Its short report series, *Policy Insights*, covers a wide range of higher ed topics, including accountability, while *Policy Alert* and *Stat Alert* provide a weekly e-mail notice on new policy-related reports and data. We also publish an annual *Tuition and Fees* report with detailed data on all public institutions in the West, as well as a regional fact book that provides a wealth of data on access, affordability, finance, faculty, technology, and workforce issues.

The Policy unit is also involved in a project with the State Higher Education Executive Officers, the U.K.'s Dept. for Education and Skills, and the Higher Education Funding Council for England. In May 2003, the organizations convened an invitational forum to examine how performance funding impacts efforts to widen participation.

Programs and Services

WICHE's three Student Exchange Programs – the Professional Student Exchange, Western Regional Graduate Program, and Western Undergraduate Exchange – currently enroll over 18,000 students and saved students and their families some $76 million last year. Other Programs and Services initiatives included:

- Northwest Academic Forum
- NEON, the Northwest Educational Outreach Network
- American TelEdCommunications Alliance
- Communications activities: NewsCap, factsheets, Web site, annual reports, state briefings, commission meeting support
- 50th anniversary activities in member states and regionally
- 50th anniversary evaluation of WICHE and constituent survey
- Workforce Briefs

The Programs and Services unit is responsible for several interstate programs that foster regional collaboration and resource sharing. Its primary responsibilities include managing WICHE's three Student Exchange Programs, developing a number of innovative initiatives that support the region's students and institutions, and working with legislators to find out how to best meet the needs of our member states.

In 2002-03, a record 18,000 students participated in the Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP), the Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP), and the Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE). Our newest exchange program, WUE, founded in 1988, enrolled some 18,000 students in 2002-03; the program's 150-percent-of-resident-tuition rate saved students and their families approximately $76 million, a 9 percent increase in savings over the previous year. Fourteen of the 15 WICHE states participate in the exchange (California sends students to other states, but only one of its schools receives students from other states). WUE students can enroll in degree programs at some 120 institutions, which offer a diverse array of academic options along with considerable cost savings. States and institutions that receive WUE students benefit from the program as well, as the exchange helps to strengthen institutional enrollment bases, fill capacity in academic programs, improve efficiency, and provide student diversity.

WICHE's first program, the Professional Student Exchange Program was created as an interstate exchange in 1953, focusing on three professional fields: medicine,

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dentistry, and veterinary medicine. Today, students enroll in an additional 10 fields: physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, graduate library studies, pharmacy, public health, architecture, and physician assistant. Some 700 students enrolled in 13 professional fields via PSEP in 2002-03, and receiving institutions took in over $11.3 million in fees. The program helps fill workforce needs in highly valued fields by putting students in programs that their home states don't offer in their public institutions.

The Western Regional Graduate Program serves the region's graduate students, offering 134 distinctive and high-quality programs at some three dozen institutions in all WICHE states except California. Participating students pay resident tuition rates. This year WICHE added a number of new programs to our roster, including two focused on justice and rural development at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks; on domestic violence program management and public policy at the University of Colorado at Denver; on ocean engineering at Oregon State University; and on medical informatics and neuroscience at the University of Utah.

Programs and Services is exploring new ways of serving the region's students, including the electronic delivery of academic programs. This year, WICHE, in partnership with the Northwest Academic Forum (NWAF) – a 10-state group of institutions and state policymakers that fosters regional resource sharing and promotes innovative and collaborative efforts among its member institutions – launched a new project, NEON (Northwest Educational Outreach Network). NEON works with the higher education systems and institutions in 10 WICHE states to increase access to existing distance education programs, to forge institutional partnerships, to develop new academic courses and programs, and to overcome policy barriers to intra- and interstate collaborations. The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) provided a three-year grant to WICHE in October 2002 to support NEON's efforts to help states utilize distance learning to respond to their unmet educational needs. Participating states and higher ed institutions will partner with other states to offer programs at a distance or to jointly create new programs. This year, NEON took first steps to work with institutions to offer a distance-delivered Ph.D. for nursing educators; it is also developing programs in other high-need professions, such as teacher education and logistics and supply-chain management.

WICHE is NWAF's secretariat and works with its executive committee to plan an annual meeting each spring that is attended by provosts, academic vice presidents, and chief academic officers of the member institutions and states. NWAF's 2003 meeting, held on April 28-29 in Laramie, WY, focused on the theme "Building New P-20 Partnerships and Collaborations."

Another Programs and Services endeavor, launched in fall 2001, is the American TelEdCommunications Alliance. Created by the WICHE and three other regional higher ed compacts (the Midwestern Higher Education Commission, the New England Board of Higher Education, and the Southern Regional Education Board), along with MiCTA, a national nonprofit technology association based in Michigan, the ATAlliance promotes the joint procurement of educational telecommunications products and services and advanced technology, with an eye to providing cost savings and better service to educational and other nonprofits. This year, the ATAlliance expanded its services to include e-learning course management system products, in addition to voice and video products, computer hardware and software, power and energy management programs, library equipment, and office supplies. The Programs and Services unit is working to inform colleges and universities, the K-12 sector, and other nonprofit organizations in the 15 Western states about opportunities to become members and purchase telecommunications services at lower costs, as well as to gain access to information about state-of-the-art telecommunications services.

Last year, we relaunched our Legislative Advisory Committee. The committee, with members from the legislatures of each of the WICHE states, allows us to communicate directly with several key constituencies to increase our knowledge of what our states need – and to broaden their understanding of how WICHE's programs and services can help. The committee convened its annual meeting in mid-July 2002 in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Council of State Governments-West.

This year, Programs and Services has been overseeing WICHE's 50th anniversary events in each state. In addition to celebrating our partnerships with the states, these events provide an overview of higher education in the state and the West, focusing on current challenges – particularly those related to finance and providing access for underserved populations – and offering ways that WICHE can help. Staff support was provided to the commission's comprehensive evaluation of the WICHE organization and its leadership, in conjunction with WICHE's 50th year of service to the Western states. The unit also oversees the creation of WICHE's print and electronic publications – from writing and editing to design and publication – including *NewsCap*, our bimonthly newsletter, and the *Workforce Briefs* – detailing workforce projections in each of our 15 member states – as well as a host of reports, papers, and brochures.

WCET

WCET, the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications, is a national leader in helping states and institutions use new technologies to improve education. Members representing more than 40 U.S. states and four continents cooperate in sharing information, identifying barriers to the use of telecommunications in education, evaluating technological approaches to education, and facilitating multistate approaches to technology-based learning. This year's projects included:

- Research on effective online student services
- E-Learning Technologies: Web Resource for Comparisons
- Technology Costing Methodology project
- MDE Institutes (July 21-25)
- 2002 Annual Conference (November 6-9)
- Student Services Webcast Series
- Consulting on statewide and campus e-learning projects

WCET, the cooperative advancing the effective use of technology in higher education, was involved in several projects last year that focused on finance, innovation, and other areas of research. One project involved implementing standard analytical principles to assess the costs of higher ed's use of technology; the project was developed by WCET and NCHEMS with support from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). In partnership with the Southern Regional Education Board, WCET cohosted a conference in Washington, D.C., on May 14-15, 2002, to explore the policy implications of costing and financing educational technologies.

WICHE supports a number of initiatives focused on innovation and information technology as they relate to higher education. As part of its global outreach, WCET has undertaken work with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to explore issues that institutions in developing nations will face in using copyrighted information and in sharing course materials.

WCET continues to work with institutions and state agencies as they develop and expand their distance-learning plans. In 2002, it hosted two major professional development events: its annual conference and the Institute for Managing and Developing E-learning (MDE).

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Last year, another project, *E-Learning Technologies: Web Resource for Comparisons*, addressed the needs of institutions developing online education by giving administrators a single place to go (www.edutools.info) to compare course management systems, e-learning policies, student services software. The project is supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

Another WCET project, supported by the Hewlett Foundation, allowed WCET to study new IT developments, such as the policy implications of the open courseware movement and the need for a Web-based decision tool to allow institutions to evaluate online courses for purchase or licensing. WCET also completed a project on Web-based student services for online learners, with support from the U.S. Dept. for Education's Learning Anywhere Anytime Partnership. The results of this work are continuing to be applied – through Webcasts on student service issues and in consulting work with institutions and higher education systems seeking to improve their services.

In addition to its project work, last year WCET hosted a post-doctoral intern, with support from the Ford Foundation, bringing a fresh perspective to its work.

Mental Health

The WICHE Mental Health Program seeks to enhance the public systems of care for persons with mental illnesses, children with serious emotional disturbances, and their families. The program approaches this mission through partnerships with state mental health authorities, advocacy and consumer groups, federal agencies, and higher education institutions. Activities focus upon direct technical assistance to state and local agencies, policy analysis and research, support of state mental health agency data analysis, and liaison activities with higher education to enhance workforce development. Current projects include:

- Western States Decision Support Group
- Mental Health Program Performance Measurement Improvement
- South Dakota Children's Mental Health System of Care
- Wyoming and South Dakota Consumer Satisfaction Survey Projects
- President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health
- Wyoming Community Consensus Building Project for Children's Mental Health Improvement
- Oregon Assessment of Mental Health Incidence and Prevalence

The Mental Health Program works to improve public systems of care for persons with mental illnesses, children with serious emotional disturbances, and their families. The program focuses on direct technical assistance to state and local agencies, policy analysis and research, support of state mental health agency data analysis, and liaison activities with higher education to enhance workforce development. Its partners include state mental health authorities, advocacy and consumer groups, federal agencies, and higher education institutions.

Last year, the Mental Health Program continued its work with the Western States Decision Support Group (WSDSG), which enables interstate collaboration for improving data infrastructure and performance measurement in the public mental health systems. The WSDSG conducts regional conferences focused on collaborative activities and professional peer knowledge exchange among state mental health program evaluators and system planners. Major program activities include assessing the prevalence of mental illness in the West; workforce development to ensure the deployment of competent mental health professionals; and the development of technical assistance activities in the area of evidence-based practice.

The Mental Health Program also developed a number of new initiatives, for which funding is currently being sought, including:

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- The National Rural Mental Health Technical Assistance Cooperative: A project in the early stages of development with the University of Southern Maine Muskie Institute of Health Policy Research, University of Texas Medical Branch, and the University of Florida Center for Rural Behavioral Health. The partners are developing a prospectus and business plan for use in the solicitation of funding.

- South Dakota Evidence-Based Practice Initiative: In cooperation with the South Dakota Division of Mental Health, a proposal was submitted in response to a federal RFA to develop an initiative to focus workforce development and program evaluation activities around the implementation of Assertive Community Treatment in multiple areas of the state for adults with serious mental illness.

- Wyoming Evidence-Based Practice Initiative: In cooperation with the Wyoming Division of Mental Health, a proposal was developed in response to a federal RFA to implement two evidence based practices across the mental health system. WICHE would focus on the workforce development/training component of this initiative.

- University of Alaska Mental Health Workforce Development Needs Assessment: The Mental Health Program began preliminary discussions with the university to collaborate in the assessment of workforce development needs for the State of Alaska and to pinpoint the implications for the university.

CONAHEC
The Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration

The Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration (CONAHEC), based at the University of Arizona, helps institutions and states explore initiatives involving education in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. WICHE was a founding partner of this unique consortium and is represented on its board of directors, which held its first meeting in Guadalajara in March 2003. CONAHEC's 130 members are drawn from higher education institutions and organizations. Its media are three: conferences that address higher ed issues in North America and foster trilateral collaborations; research papers on cross-border higher ed issues; and its North American higher education portal. Current projects include:

- Ninth North American Higher Education Conference (Spring 2004, in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico). The theme will focus on the urgency of building North America's economy, and higher education's role in the process.
- North American higher ed portal (http://conahec.org)
- BORDER PACT (U.S.-Mexico) Network
- North American Student Exchange Program

CONAHEC helps institutions and states explore initiatives involving education in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. WICHE, a founding partner, is represented on its board of directors, which held its first meeting in Guadalajara on March 25, 2003. Based at the University of Arizona, CONAHEC draws its 130 members from higher education institutions and organizations all over North America.

In 2002-03, CONAHEC continued its work on a number of higher ed, workforce, and social issues. It assisted North American higher ed institutions to connect with one another; helped to internationalize member campuses; provided access to international education within North America; and worked to globalize tomorrow's workforce. Last year, CONAHEC created a new portal, officially launched in December of 2002. It also concentrated on building its membership and published an essay and a flyer looking back over the past 10 years of regional collaboration and looking ahead to emerging issues for the coming decade.

CONAHEC's U.S.-Mexico borderlands network called BORDER PACT awarded a third round of seed money grants to academic institutions and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working on projects to improve life in the borderlands. Projects

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typically focus on the environment, health, immigration, sustainable development, and education.

WICHE and CONAHEC have established a regional tuition bank, whereby institutions will make specified educational programs at their institution available to students from other institutions participating in the network; the program is based on multilateral "tuition swaps," where students pay fees to their home institution and are responsible for their own travel, lodging, and other expenses. As of fall 2002, when the first students embarked on their exchanges, 34 higher educational institutions from Canada, the U.S., and Mexico had signed up to participate, offering more than 250 academic programs to prospective students in the three countries. Within the next three years, the exchange program – designed for both undergraduate and graduate students – will involve approximately 90 higher education institutions. In October 2002, CONAHEC's University of Arizona office also received a three-year implementation grant from FIPSE to substantially increase international exchange opportunities for U.S. students to participate in short-term study programs in Mexico and Canada.

The WICHE Commission (as of May 2003)

WICHE's 45 commissioners are appointed by their governors from among state higher executive officers, college and university presidents, legislators, and business leaders from the 15 Western states. This regional commission provides governance and guidance to WICHE's staff in Boulder, Colorado. Charles Ruch, president of Boise State University, is chair of the WICHE Commission; Don Carlson, state senator, Vancouver, is vice chair.

Alaska

Diane M. Barrans, executive director, Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, Juneau

Johnny Ellis, state senator, Anchorage

Mark Hamilton, president, University of Alaska Statewide System, Fairbanks

Arizona

Linda Blessing, executive director, Arizona Board of Regents, Phoenix

Lawrence M. Gudis, senior regional vice president, University of Phoenix, Phoenix

John Haeger, president, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff

California

Francisco Hernandez, vice chancellor, University of California, Santa Cruz

Herbert Medina, associate professor, Mathematics Dept., Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles

Robert Moore, executive director, California Postsecondary Education Commission, Sacramento

Colorado

William F. Byers, consumer and public relations manager, Grand Valley Power, Fruita

Tim Foster, executive director, Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Denver

William G. Kuepper III, senior policy advisor, Colorado Commission on Higher Education, Denver

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Hawaii

Doris Ching, vice president for student affairs, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu

Clyde T. Kodani, president, Kodani & Associates, Inc., Lihue

Raymond S. Ono, senior vice president, University Banking Center, First Hawaiian Bank, Honolulu

Idaho

Jack Riggs, physician, Coeur d'Alene

Charles Ruch (WICHE chair, 2003), president, Boise State University

Gary W. Stivers, executive director, State Board of Education, Boise

Montana

Francis J. Kerins, president emeritus, Carroll College, Helena

Carrol Krause, interim commissioner, Montana University System, Helena

Cindy Younkin, state representative, Bozeman

Nevada

Jane Nichols, chancellor, University and Community College System of Nevada, Reno

Raymond D. Rawson, state senator, Las Vegas

Carl Shaff, educational consultant, Nevada State Dept. of Education, Reno

New Mexico

Dede Feldman, state senator, Albuquerque

Everett Frost (WICHE chair, 2000), president emeritus and professor emeritus, Anthropology Dept., Eastern New Mexico University, Portales

Patricia Anaya Sullivan, assistant director, WERC, Las Cruces

North Dakota

Larry Isaak, chancellor, North Dakota University System, Bismarck

Richard Kunkel, vice president, North Dakota Board of Higher Education, Devils Lake

David Nething, state senator, Jamestown

Oregon

Ryan Deckert, state senator, Portland

Camille Preus-Braly, commissioner, Oregon Dept. of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, Salem

Diane Vines (WICHE chair, 1997), vice chancellor for corporate and public affairs and board secretary, Oregon University System, Portland

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South Dakota

Robert Burns, distinguished professor, Political Science Dept., South Dakota State University, Brookings

James O. Hansen, chair, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

Robert T. (Tad) Perry (WICHE chair, 2002), executive director, South Dakota Board of Regents, Pierre

Utah

Cecelia H. Foxley, commissioner of higher education, Utah System of Higher Education, Salt Lake City

David Gladwell, state senator, North Ogden

E. George Mantes, member, Utah State Board of Regents, Salt Lake City

Washington

Don Carlson (WICHE vice chair, 2003), state senator, Vancouver

Marcus S. Gaspard, executive director, Washington State Higher Education Coordinating Board, Olympia

Debora Merle, policy advisor for higher education, Washington Office of the Governor, Olympia

Wyoming

John Barrasso, state senator and orthopedic surgeon, Casper

Philip L. Dubois, president, University of Wyoming, Laramie

Jenne Lee Twiford, principal, Douglas Middle School, Douglas

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Program Directors

David Longanecker, executive director

Cheryl Blanco, director, Policy Analysis and Research

Sally Johnstone, director, WCET (Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications)

Jere Mock, director, Programs and Services

Dennis Mohatt, director, Mental Health Program

Marv Myers, director, Administrative Services

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Web Site

This annual report, along with in-depth information on WICHE programs, higher education resources, and member state highlights, is available at the WICHE Web site:

www.wiche.edu

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